

Senator Robert Kennedy often ended his speeches by paraphrasing Nobel Prize winner George Bernard Shaw: *Some men see things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?*

It could be said that those words do not apply to us here in this chamber because they're a cliché or too grand. I say those words do apply here and now, more than ever.

Inauguration day gives us the opportunity to reflect upon our successes as well as areas where we need to work harder and rededicate ourselves to the ideas and initiatives that make us better.

It is in that vein that we start a new term – Board of Alderman, School Committee and Executive Office coming together in partnership to continue the work we've started over the past two years with vigor, focus and direction.

Newton is a beacon of progress and promise in our state and country because of our commitment to excellence in education; innovation inside and outside of government; and our rich history of culture and the arts.

I'm proud of the work we've all done together in the last two years- striving to meet the vision that we set forth.

When I became Mayor I understood we needed to get our financial house in order and put our government on a responsible path of sustainability, and you have partnered with my administration, to make significant strides to do just that.

The city has seen two of the most difficult budget cycles in years during this tough economy.

The Board, under the leadership of President Lennon and committee chairs and working with my office rolled up our sleeves together and got to work to pass two

responsible balanced budgets that protected education, public safety and vital city services.

We worked together to ensure the Chestnut Hill Square project moved forward, which will give us a stronger tax base and improvements to Route 9.

I'm looking forward to moving on the badly needed recommendations of the zoning reform group that will help Newton move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and promote responsible development in our villages that improves the quality of life for our residents. In addition, we can state with pride that Newton is a leader among cities in Massachusetts in protecting our environment. We were the first municipality to adopt the stretch code and were named one of the commonwealth's greenest communities because of your efforts.

We successfully eliminated the gulf between municipal operations and the Newton Public Schools through the leadership of School Committee Chair Claire Sokoloff and NPS Staff led by Superintendent David Fleischman.

The milestone agreement that was signed with our teachers union was an effort made possible by their determination and commitment to the bedrock of our community- education.

As we work together on a daily basis in local government as Alderman and School Committee members, the women and men that make our city run often do not have time to step back and reflect on what the Greek philosopher Aristotle defined as politics, known as the affairs of state relating to its citizens. Politics should be the art of making the expectations of our community possible. Yes, our School Committee meetings can be long – stretching into the evening hours, as can meetings of the Board of Alderman. Deliberations over policy, votes on budget items ranging from roads and buildings to adequate resources for critical programs in our schools and city can be difficult. At the same time we must always remember that the decisions we are making now will have an impact on current and future generations.

**We all know there is so much more to be done- none of us are willing to rest on our laurels. That's why Newton is one the best communities in the United States to live in. Collectively we must challenge ourselves and our residents.**

**That means addressing the needs of current and future constituents head on - continuing to put in place an efficient, effective, innovative government that inspires confidence and partnership – and provides opportunity for all. It means finding savings where we can and investing where we must, specifically in addressing the growth of our school-aged population; needs of our seniors; getting to work on our buildings, roads and infrastructure; and protecting public safety. And it means expanding economic development where we can so that our city can expand upon its vitality.**

**I want to thank you for committing your intellect, passion, and time to serve Newton. Our community is and will continue to be great because of the dedication and involvement of citizens like you. Let us go forward this year resolved to ensure our wonderful city meets its full potential. God bless you, our city, our commonwealth and our Nation. Have a great New Year.**